



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 160 Walter Francis Bishop

Elementary School Q160

**109-59 Inwood Street
Queens
NY 11435**

Principal: Tiffany Hicks

**Date of review: May 20, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince**

The School Context

P.S. 160 Walter Francis Bishop is an elementary school with 706 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 13% Asian, 55% Black, 20% Hispanic, and 1% White students. The student body includes 5% English Language Learners and 18% students with disabilities. Boys account for 56% of the students enrolled and girls account for 44%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 92.0%

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards	Additional Findings	Proficient
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson <i>Framework for Teaching</i> , aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products	Focus	Proficient
2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels	Additional Findings	Proficient
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Celebration	Well Developed
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for professionalism and instruction to the entire staff and provide training aligned with elements of the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. School leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path of career and college readiness.

Impact

A culture of mutual accountability for high expectations is in place while parent partnerships help support student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty define high expectations as teachers challenging children to think at a high level and to expose students to grade-level text, using *Webb's Depth of Knowledge* questioning to elevate student understanding. To support this expectation, the principal and teacher leaders use the *Danielson Framework for Teaching* to provide meaningful feedback to teachers based upon formal and informal visits and observations, as evidenced by documents reviewed. Also, teachers support each other through intervisitations and ongoing discussion during team work. A review of teacher team agendas also showed a lens on using rigorous questioning and discussion with tiered activities. Work on curriculum resources and grade-specific portfolios reflect elements of the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. There are focused trainings on the domains at teacher team meetings and school-wide professional development, some of which is teacher-led.
- A strong relationship exists between families and school, starting from when new students enter and continuing through the end of the school year. The faculty and staff communicate via email and Goggle Docs. Parents and family members stated that there is an open door policy throughout the school focusing on students taking ownership of their learning and having accountability for their behaviors. Parents indicated their appreciation that the school has many residencies, such as Midori & Friends, Alvin Alley Dancers, and Mad Science, focusing on the whole child. Also, the social-emotional benefits of having the arts in the school with extensive clubs give students a taste of opportunities for differing careers and colleges. The positive behavior program in the school gives teachers option to use character trait tickets as a management tool. Parents are informed of expectations for behavior and can monitor their child's progress on Class Dojo and Pupil Path. Parents note that having the tools to monitor and support their children, high expectations are supported, embraced and reinforced by all stakeholders.
- Parents shared that the school does an exceptional job ensuring that they are aware of the expectations to improve student performance and support the school motto of "Work Hard, Get Smart, No Excuses." School leaders effectively communicate the expectations for college and career readiness by providing workshops for parents. There is a weekly newsletter for staff and parents. A Shutterfly website highlights the extensive school events and shares student work for parents to view. There are curriculum nights, monthly Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) nights, and Student of the Month assemblies for parents to celebrate student's academic achievements and exemplary character traits.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and the Danielson *Framework For Teaching*; however, they do not yet reflect, across a vast majority of classrooms, a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best. Teaching strategies that provide scaffolds and multiple entry points for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities vary across the grades.

Impact

In some classroom there are missed opportunities to engage all students in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- Across most classrooms, students were in small-group instruction. In some classes, students participated in discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions; however, not all students were engaged in-depth analysis and peer-to-peer interaction. In many classes, students used research skills, including citing text-based evidence as they discussed and defended their positions in their groups. However, evidence of higher-level thinking in student groups, and in pairs, to provide support for struggling learners, English Language Learners or students with disabilities, was inconsistent. In a grade 5 class, students were reading about Flint, Michigan and annotating using “v” for vocabulary to indicate important words to know, looking for the gist of the article. Table groups had different assignments. Specific instructions were used to organize thoughts and help student thinking through their book. However, in a kindergarten class the teacher read all the information and the students received the same work, there were no small groups, although the students did turn and talk once to look at a picture, thus missing the opportunity for students to be active participants in the book discussion.
- The school continues to work on differentiating instruction so that all lessons engage students and challenge thinking, including increasing effective questioning that elicits higher-order thinking and extends learning. In some classes students were asked to respond in full sentences and sentence starters were available providing necessary scaffolds. Students justified responses by citing textual evidence, as in a grade 3 class that was working on whether dress codes are constitutional or not, and making connections to the real world. There were peer interactions and students focused on justifying their statements working in groups with different assignments.
- It was stated by students at the student meeting that often, stronger students take over discussions, therefore limiting the opportunity for all students to participate. While many teachers encourage students to frame their own questions and respond to other students, there were instances in some classrooms when teachers dominated the lesson and answered student questions instead of reframing and redirecting the questions to other students for discussion, thus not allowing students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School Leaders and faculty engage in a rigorous process of curriculum development, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate instructional shifts.

Impact

Rigorous curricula and academic tasks build coherence, promote college and career readiness, and emphasize higher-order thinking skills across grades and subjects

Supporting Evidence

- An examination of unit plans indicate that they closely meet the needs of individual students, using rigorous content, critical thinking and problem-solving skills along with an English as a New Language (ENL) component that is embedded into plans so that English Language Learners can demonstrate their thinking. *ReadyGen* has been revised to ensure that students use more textual evidence to justify claims, reinforcing the instructional shift. The school incorporates into lesson planning the RACE protocol, Restate Answer, Cite, and Explain, to further align to Common Core in English Language Arts (ELA) classes across grades. The curriculum units include summative assessment tasks from the Teachers College Rubric, which includes scaffolding and enrichment. Thinking maps are embedded into all subject areas to scaffold learning and organize thinking.
- There is consistent use of academic vocabulary and coherence in math concepts. It was a school-wide decision to use *GO Math!* in kindergarten through grade 5 as a base while designing deeper focus on the writing process to ensure rigorous habits to extend student thinking and construct responses to explain their thinking, while multiple choice questions are still incorporated. Upon reading the grade-level curriculum units in science and social studies, the scope and sequences are aligned to match texts of what students are reading in English Language Arts with a focus on using thinking maps and strategy charts to solidify the coherence of what is taught and provide multiple entry points. All documents are on Google Drive to support teachers in sharing information. Teachers also track their progress within the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* on *TeachBoost*.
- Teacher's College Reading is used in kindergarten and grade 1 and *Ready Gen* in grades 2 through 5 supplemented by Scholastic Guided Reading, *Foundations*, Wilson, and Teacher's College Writing in kindergarten through grade 5. There is a school-wide instructional focus on close reading along with questioning and discussion as a basis of rigorous instruction that is evident in unit plans. Furthermore, project-based learning units are evident in science and social studies.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress towards goals and checks for understanding.

Impact

Assessment practices provide students and teachers with actionable feedback regarding student achievement. Curricula and lesson planning are adjusted based on data analysis to meet student learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- All teachers use common assessments aligned to the Common Core and adjust as needed; this is very clear in the lower grades as evident by the baseline assessment data charts used. Teachers have created and/or modified rubrics and checklists aligned to key standards for each unit of study based on pre-and-post assessment as part of the *GO Math!* and *ReadyGen* programs. Teachers were observed conferring with groups and students at the student meeting expressed that they are comfortable talking with each other and discussing their feedback on a specific task, as well as peer-assessing using rubrics.
- Exit slips are used to check for understanding in the upper grades as well as leveled texts and a variety of graphic organizers that included t-charts, KWL charts and anchor charts that allowed students to self-assess their work. Conference notes are also used to assess student progress toward unit and grade-level goals. Students use turn-and-talk, think-pair-share as a means of assessing each other's thinking. Furthermore, writing on demand, post on demand and published pieces are graded against a school-wide rubric. A review of student work products at the student meeting revealed task-specific rubrics and checklists as well as peer assessment, one that included "consider adding more citations." In addition, students showed an understanding of the task, for example, a grade 2 student brought bar graphs as an example of improvement in their work. The student stated that, "Plotting points and creating graphs help you sort out information and compare it to other information." Another student discussed her project on women's rights and addressed the teacher's feedback asking her to expand her thoughts on equal pay for equal work.
- In response to trends and current data, ongoing professional development is planned and teacher's instructional capacity, per observation reports, has strengthened. Formative, periodic and summative assessments are used to plan refine and align lessons to meet the needs of all students and assist in planning professional learning opportunities to support this work. These common assessments are analyzed to show student growth along the continuum of the standards.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input in key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has strengthened instructional capacity. Shared leadership structures build capacity that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams work in assessing student work using Teachers College Reading and Writing to ensure consistency across classrooms and grades. Student data is used to group students and is used to identify and make revisions in instruction. Using this data, teams have developed unit plans in reading, writing and math based on the Common Core and supplemented *ReadyGen* and *GO Math!* with their own work. Teams used The Common Core Companion: The Standards Decoded as they plan lessons and identify strategies to meet the needs of their students. Lessons and tasks based on skill level are constantly looked at for revision to meet student needs.
- There is distributive leadership throughout the school where teachers assist in instructional and curricular decisions that affect student learning. There is teacher-led professional development and input to support colleagues and determine areas of need. School leaders and teachers work collaboratively on making curriculum decisions to promote student progress and impact the quality of the instructional core across classrooms. Teachers follow a set protocol during all team meetings as evident in the grade 3 team meeting where there were team roles, looking at student work protocols, clarifying strategies and next steps. Cross-graded vertical teams meet to compare student notes, discuss data, creating an awareness of where students are challenged and where they need to go to succeed across grades. Teachers stated that they now have more interest in working across grades to better meet the needs of students. During a vertical team meeting observed, a discussion ensued regarding student use of annotation and comprehension. It was observed that student outcomes were similar across grades noting that student improvement in the area of identifying key details is needed. Teachers created an action plan to increase proficiency in stating key details, both verbally and in writing.
- Teacher teams help facilitate intervisitations in order to gain insight into their own strengths and challenges. Teachers share information in a non-evaluative manner and use Google Drive to schedule and track visits and give feedback. Lesson plans created by the teacher teams specify guided reading and small groups, and often model both academic vocabulary and content area vocabulary. There are grade-level teacher leaders and lead teachers in math, English Language Arts, and science. The ELA vertical team was trained in the Triple Take Protocol and this information was disseminated throughout the grades. Teacher team minutes are shared with administration and teachers receive feedback on their meetings and next steps to support their work and protocols.